

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7532

USIA WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

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TAGS: PFOR, JO, US, XF

SUBJECT: JORDANIAN MEDIA COVERAGE OF KING HUSSEIN'S VISIT TO
U.S.

1. SUMMARY: JORDANIAN MEDIA GAVE USUAL EXTENSIVE COVERAGE
TO KING HUSSEIN'S TRAVELS IN U.S., WITH STRESS ON OFFICIAL NATURE
OF ROYAL COUPLE'S ACTIVITIES, AND PARTICULARLY ON THEMES OF KING'S
LOS ANGELES SPEECH: FRANK CRITICISM OF ISRAELI INTRANSIGENCE,
SUPPORT FOR PLO AS REPRESENTATIVE OF PALESTINIANS, AND PLEA
FOR U.S. TO PLAY A FORCEFUL ROLE IN SEARCH FOR PEACE. TV
FOOTAGE ON WASHINGTON PORTION OF TRIP--AIRPORT CEREMONIES,
WHITE HOUSE SPEECHES, DINNER, TALKS WITH PRESIDENT, WREATH-
LAYINGS--WAS SHOWN VIRTUALLY UNEDITED. ALL OF KING'S SPEECHES
(BUT NOT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS) WERE PRESENTED ON JORDAN TV
IN BOTH ENGLISH AND ARABIC, AS WERE EDITED VERSIONS OF KING'S
AND RIFAI'S PRESS INTERVIEWS. TEXTS OF SPEECHES WERE PRINTED
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IN LOCAL PAPERS. JORDAN TV CARRIED PM RIFAI'S SPIRITED AND

COMBATIVE GIVE-AND-TAKE SESSION WITH MARTIN AGRONSKY, FOR WHICH RIFAI HAS RECEIVED HIGHLY COMPLIMENTARY COMMENTS FROM OUR JORDANIAN CONTACTS FOR UPHOLDING ARAB POSITION AGAINST HOSTILE AND PRO-ISRAEL PRESS PANELISTS. HAWK ISSUE AVOIDED UNTIL LOS ANGELES PRESS CONFERENCE. END SUMMARY.

2. ARTICLES AND EDITORIAL DISCUSSION IN LOCAL PRESS STRESSED KING'S STATEMENTS ON EXPLOSIVE NATURE OF LEBANESE CRISIS (INCLUDING HIS COMMENTS ON CONSTRUCTIVE NATURE OF SYRIAN MEDIATION EFFORTS AND ADVANTAGES TO BE GAINED FROM SYRIAN INTERVENTION IN LEBANON) AND NECESSITY OF ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. IMPRESSION WAS EARLY CONVEYED IN PRESS TREATMENT THAT SYRIA MIGHT BE FORCED TO INTERVENE IN ORDER TO FORESTALL ISRAELI INTRUSION INTO LEBANON: "THE KING PROVIDED EVIDENCE WHICH SUGGESTED THAT ISRAEL WOULD INTERVENT MILITARILY IN LEBANON IF SYRIA'S ROLE WERE HAMPERED. ISRAEL NEEDS NO PRETEXT TO INTERFERE IN LEBANON, HE SAID, AND ITS REAL GOAL WOULD BE SYRIAN AND EVEN JORDAN, NOT LEBANON" (AR-RAYY, APRIL 2, QUOTING KING AT BLAIR HOUSE). AMMAN PRESS ALSO FEATURED KING'S CRITICISM OF SADAT'S PROPOSAL FOR COORDINATED ARAB INTERVENTION IN LEBANON.

3. KING'S STATEMENTS ON NECESSITY OF ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORIES WERE REITERATIONS OF STANDARD THEMES. LOCAL PRESS PLAYED KING'S CHICAGO SPEECH, WHICH IN FACT DEALT PRIMARILY WITH ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS MATTERS, AS MAJOR POLICY STATEMENT OF "FOUR POINTS" RELATING TO MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT. KING'S COMMENTS ON INVESTMENT POSSIBILITIES IN JORDAN WERE TREATED HERE ALMOST AS FOOTNOTE.

4. ABOVE THEMES WERE PORTRAYED IN FORMAT WHICH CONVEYED STRONG IMPRESSION OF KING FULFILLING HIS PLEDGE MADE IN PRE-DEPARTURE TV SPEECH TO NATION THAT HE WOULD SEEK FRANK ANSWERS FROM AMERICANS AND WOULD VIGOROUSLY PRESS ARAB VIEWPOINT. "THE KING WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM WASHINGTON WHAT THE REAL STANCE OF THE UNITED STATES IS,...FOR THERE ARE MANY AMERICAN POSITIONS WHICH NEED BOTH INTERPRETATION AND RECONSIDERATION." ARTICLES FREQUENTLY INCLUDED INTRODUCTION, "THE KING TOLD AMERICAN OFFICIALS," ETC. ROLE OF KING AS HARD-NOSED ADVOCATE OF ARAB INTERESTS FURTHER ENHANCED BY HEADLINE OPENING LOCAL ARTICLE ON "ISSUES AND ANSWERS" INTERVIEW: "HUSSEIN BELIEVES THAT KISSINGER'S LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GER DID NOT FULFILL HIS PROMISES REGARDING WEST BANK, AND STEP-BY-STEP POLICY IS NO LONGER VALID."

5. MEDIA USED KING'S LOS ANGELES SPEECH (CARRIED IN APRIL 7 WIRELESS FILE) AS DRAMATIC CLIMAX OF ROYAL EFFORTS TO SPEAK FRANKLY TO U.S. SPEECH WAS BROADCAST IN ARABIC AND ENGLISH ON PRIME TIME TV APRIL 8 AND RECEIVED BANNER HEADLINE IN PRESS APRIL 9 (AD-DUSTOUR): "HUSSEIN: MIDEAST AT CROSSROADS; KING ASKS U.S.

TO PLAY ITS ROLE IN SEARCH FOR PEACE; WARS IN AREA COST FORTY THOUSAND DEATHS AND 50 BILLION DOLLARS."

6. MEDIA TREATMENT OBVIOUSLY WAS CAREFULLY TAILORED. NO SIGHT-SEEING EXCURSIONS WERE REPORTED. NO MENTION OF HAWK MISSILE CONTROVERSY WAS MADE UNTIL FINAL PRESS CONFERENCE IN LOS ANGELES (AMMAN 1885). TV AND RADIO HAVE NOT MENTIONED ANY OF KING'S REMARKS ON AIR DEFENSE ISSUE, AND APRIL 9 PRESS MADE NO MENTION OF ISSUE EXCEPT FOR FRONT-PAGE AR-RAYY EDITORIAL SUPPORTING KING'S POSITION ON HAWKS VIS-A-VIS U.S. AS EXPRESSED IN LOS ANGELES. MOST FREQUENT COMMENT WE HAVE HEARD ON KING'S VISIT (ASIDE FROM LOCAL CRITICISM OF U.S. OCCASIONED BY AMMAN MEDIA'S HAWK REPORTING) HAS BEEN FAVORABLE, AND MANY JORDANIANS HAVE INDICATED THAT IT WAS HIGHLY FORTUNATE THAT KING WAS IN U.S. DURING LEBANESE CRISIS. THIS REFLECTS LOCAL BELIEF OF SOME THAT HE PLAYED HELPFUL ROLE IN DE-FUSING LEBANESE SITUATION LAST WEEK. KING'S IMAGE WAS ALSO HELPED BY FAVORABLE REACTION LOCALLY TO HIS FRANK AND HARD-HITTING LOS ANGELES SPEECH.
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